

**HISTORICVS DISSERTISSIMVS, BUT WHAT ELSE?  
QUESTIONS REGARDING THE LITERARY WORK  
OF VIRIUS NICOMACHUS FLAVIANUS<sup>1</sup>**

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Historian; Philosopher; Rhetorician; Poet; Biographer; Fabulist; Grammarian and Interpreter from Greek to Latin in addition, each of these labels was used at least once by modern scholars to refer to Virius Nicomachus Flavianus. Yet another one can perhaps be added without ever having been given to him explicitly: Epistolographer. Besides these literary genres, it is also laying down the drafts of imperial constitutions – an appointment he is rightfully credited with – which was attempted in order to reveal some aspects of his literary style. In fact, Flavian, otherwise known to literary historians chiefly as one of the main characters of Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, himself actually was a writer and a distinguished one indeed during his lifetime.<sup>2</sup> In spite of this, however, all of his literary works have been lost and the little, if anything, that we know about them, has been produced by modern scholarship exclusively, and is thus controversial.

For modern scholars, Flavian has been a figure sometimes even perilously attractive, because we know at the same time too much and too little about him: too much so as to reasonably conjecture more, yet too little so as to be provided too much scope for conjectures. Moreover, the *damnatio memoriae* cast upon Flavian after his suicide at Frigidus<sup>3</sup> leaves even more room for speculation as to some specific circumstances of the non-preservation of his writings.<sup>4</sup> The following survey illustrates this very well, as it contains the bold and ingenious, although often hardly demonstrable attempts at tracing some remnants of Flavian's literary works, and at the same time the curiosities which had been failures almost as they were pronounced.

There are three principal literary works connected with Flavian. All were or will be discussed in separate papers of mine, so let us just sum up their conclusions here. The three are his historiographical writing styled *annales*, the *Vita Apollonii*, and the work containing anecdotes from the lives of philosophers of classical antiquity.

Only one thing about Flavian's historiographical writing<sup>5</sup> is known for certain: that it was dedicated at his own request to the emperor Theodosius. Contrary to general opin-

<sup>1</sup> Many warm thanks for suggestions that helped improve this paper and saved me from some omissions go to prof. Bohumila Mouchová and prof. François Paschoud.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hedrick (2000: 232sq.); *CIL* VI 1782 = *ILS* 2947 vers. 7, both commented upon by Prchlík (2011: 7sq., note 22).

<sup>3</sup> Discussed in many of its aspects by Hedrick (2000), brief basic information is given also by Grünwald (1992: 482sq.).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *infra* p. 59sq.

<sup>5</sup> To which cf. Prchlík (2011). The following two paragraphs are a summary of this paper.

ion, I do not hold its label as *Annales*, provided by the source, to be the secure title of the work. Other items are supplied by modern scholarship and are thus controversial, since especially English language scholars reject many of these conclusions as ill-founded. However, in counting on some objective obstacles to these conclusions, they are not right, as these obstacles in fact are no hard data, but rather their own interpretations of what the proponents of these conclusions interpret in different ways.<sup>6</sup>

According to these proponents, Flavian had elaborated on the history of the Roman Empire up to his own times, drawing on many well informed sources, both Latin and Greek, while himself immediately becoming a source for other historians, whose works have been preserved to this day. These works show extensive number of mutual contacts, allowing us to make up at least a basic view of some aspects of Flavian's writing. The *Epitome de Caesaribus*, the tradition Eunapius/Zosimus, the *Historia Augusta*, Ammianus' *Res gestae*, and some Byzantine chronicles which contain unique information on the history of the Roman Empire, represent a group of sources, all of which drew on some common source. This general notion is shared by many scholars; yet the identification of this common source as the *Annales* of Nicomachus Flavianus only by those who accept the features of this common source, being compatible with the views of the milieu to which Flavian belonged, i.e. the western senatorial aristocracy adherent to traditional pagan cults, provide sufficient ground for at least allowing the possibility of such identification. A moot point among these scholars remains whether there could or could not have been any religious involvement displayed in the *Annales*. For my part, I have argued for the possibility of a discreet plea for toleration of the traditional cults on the part of Theodosius who was litigant to Ambrose at the moment of the dedication of the work.

Neither does there exist any certainty regarding the *Vita Apollonii*, except that Flavian had somehow dealt with the Greek text by Philostratus. Many, including myself, believe that he had in fact translated it into Latin; others prefer considering Sidonius Apollinaris the author of the Latin translation, with yet others maintaining the non-existence of any such translation whatsoever, both these groups leaving the emendation of the original Greek text to Flavian.<sup>7</sup> In spite of this uncertainty, there appeared further considerations

<sup>6</sup> To those listed by Prchlik (2011: 4 and 6sq. with the relevant notes) Long (2006: 229sq.) should be added, who as well as others, fails to prove these proponents wrong and prefers to offer an alternative to their conclusions as to the sources of the *Divus Aurelianus* of the *Historia Augusta*. We are to believe the author that he himself had worked with the primary material supplied by both eye-witnesses and documents of the *Bibliotheca Ulpiana*. As for Alan Cameron's *The Last Pagans of Rome*, cf. infra note 7.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Prchlik (2007 [2009]) where, however, the inclusion of François Paschoud and perhaps also Jörg Schlumberger among the proponents of Pricoco's view, that the *Vita* was translated by Sidonius, must be corrected. As prof. Paschoud kindly informed me (via email of August 31, 2011), he in fact never shared Pricoco's view, since he considers the passage of Sidonius, the base of all reasoning, extremely obscure, and not sufficient to establish with certainty which of the two, if any, had been the translator (cf. Paschoud 1996: 142sq. for his own exposition). In this sense his reservations towards the notion of Flavian having been the translator of the *Vita*, to which I have pointed to, are to be understood. Besides the three viewpoints listed above, there has appeared a fourth one recently, as Long (2006: 229, note 24), when discussing the *Historia Augusta* story of Apollonius' intervention on behalf of his fellow citizens of Tyana, who were being threatened by the wrath of the emperor Aurelian (Script. Hist. Aug. Div. Aurel. 24, 2–9), states: “[m]y argument is framed allowing the possibility that Flavianus composed a Life of Apollonius continuing Philostratus. ... Philostratus, of course, includes no such episode”. She personally, however, seems to endorse Cameron's view of Flavian as the emendator of the Greek text, to be found in his, then still forthcoming book, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, which was advertised as forthcoming already by Cameron (1999: 109, note 1) and Hedrick (2000: xxv and 304).

on eventual peculiarities of Flavian's translation. According to Santo Mazzarino, Flavian's translation could have been *tropo paganeggiante*,<sup>8</sup> while following Wilhelm Enßlin an inspiration by Plotinus and a rejection of the sacrifice doctrine of Iamblichus may be envisaged.<sup>9</sup>

As to the third piece of writing, in which anecdotes from the lives of the philosophers of classical antiquity were to be found, its title *De vestigiis sive de dogmate philosophorum* can be regarded pretty much as certain, but not so much its authorship. Besides Flavian himself, some other Flaviani have also been mulled over, historical as well as fictional (with 'Flavianus' representing only a nick-name this time), but neither there is anything to prevent the eventual authorship of Flavian.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, the triviality of the content of the writing is claimed arbitrarily,<sup>11</sup> since we know nothing more than the anecdotes adduced by later writers. No one will surely deny the anecdotes having been included in many non-trivial works of antiquity.<sup>12</sup>

Another one of safely Flavian's deeds could have had literary ambitions: his letters to Symmachus. To my knowledge, there has never been any attempt to reflect in any way on the fact of their one-time existence, but the fact itself can hardly be doubted. The existence of another letters to his contemporaries may be supposed with a reason. Unfortunately, there is no letter by Flavian even in the Symmachian corpus, which deficiency may be due to a variety of reasons, none preferable to others. By no means, however, can it be an imitation of the corpus of Pliny the Younger, which contains no letters by Pliny's addressees,<sup>13</sup> while there are to be found two letters by Symmachus' addressees in his corpus – one by his father and one by Ausonius<sup>14</sup> – as well as there are some to be found in the Ciceronian corpus. Why then are there no letters by Flavian therein, with whom,

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Now the book is out, but there is no room in this paper to pursue this particular question again in detail, although, it must be admitted, there are some points emphasized in Cameron's exposition, to which I have not given full appreciation in my paper. Still I deem my view, as elaborated more widely in the context of other Flavian's possible writings bellow (p. 59sq.), tenable and preferable.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Prchlik (2007 [2009]: 203 with note 38 and 205, note 46) where Cameron's rejection is proved ill-founded.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Enßlin (1923: 54sq.; 77sq.; 85; 87sq.), according to whom it was a source of such a kind Ammianus followed in his negative assessment of Julian's sacrificial practices and while embracing the authority of Apollonius of Tyana to form his own opposite view. Authorship of that source was ascribed to Flavian by Enßlin, but he may have meant his *Annales*, referring to it as to "*seine* (sc. *Ammians*) *historische Quelle*" (p. 78). Yet, he counted on Ammianus' familiarity with Flavian's *Vita Apollonii* as well (p. 87sq.), which I hold to be a more suitable alternative. Also Ammianus' objections in the field of astrological theory detected by Enßlin as well and bent apparently against Firmicus Maternus, stemmed according to this scholar from Flavian. Enßlin's view seems compatible with the opinion of Barnes (1998: 166), according to whom Ammianus had read no Greek original of Plotinus and Porphyry, but rather Flavian's translations and adaptations, although Barnes gives no specification as to whether the *Vita Apollonii* could have possibly been one of these adaptations. To the contrary, Szidat (1982: 132sq.) and Cameron (1999: 115) denied any interest in Neoplatonic philosophy on Flavian's part. Cameron (1964: 26) moreover, objected seriously to the above summarized Enßlin's supposition: as a native speaker of Greek, Ammianus would certainly have preferred Philostratus' original to Flavian's Latin translation. On the other hand, Ammianus could have been interested in the 'added value' of Flavian's translation, had there been any, so the question remains open.

<sup>10</sup> Pace Moos (1996: 222sq., note 509).

<sup>11</sup> By Cameron (1999: 115) and less preemptorily by Schaarschmidt (1862: 103sq.).

<sup>12</sup> A detailed discussion on this piece of writing will appear in a separate paper of mine, hopefully in the next volume of *Graecolatina*.

<sup>13</sup> Clearly with the exception of the book X.

<sup>14</sup> Symm. *Epist.* I 2; 32.

judged from the number of all extant letters, Symmachus corresponded most extensively? Were they of poor literary quality? Were they meant to be published separately, in Flavian's own corpus, which either remained unpublished in the end or had disappeared without any trace? Both are possible, but neither the elimination due to self-censorship by the editor of the Symmachian corpus, Symmachus' son Quintus Fabius Memmius Symmachus, can be flatly dismissed.<sup>15</sup>

The following contribution to the debate on Flavian's writings I hold to be very important. Tony Honoré's<sup>16</sup> inquiry into the texts of the constitutions of the Theodosian Code of a period from late 386 up to 391 and later, has lead him to distinguish between six different pens, thus, according to him, six different *quaestores sacri palatii* responsible for the formulation of the drafts of these constitutions. The term of one of them corresponds with the time supposed by many to be Flavian's tenure,<sup>17</sup> hence the features of this pen would be to be regarded as the features of the pen of Flavian. These are the expression of a keynote in the first sentence, in an almost epigrammatic way, and the expanding of it

<sup>15</sup> The question of whether or not there had been any self-censorship in the process of editing of Symmachus' letters, and if so, whether only for political reasons or both political and religious, is a vexed one. Here it can only be outlined briefly. Many scholars have noted the absence of the addressees in the corpus, whose presence could have been compromising for the author: the usurpers and their proponents, Maximus, Eugenius, and Arbogast. At the same time, these scholars believed the corpus initially must have contained such letters or mentions of these persons: and since now they lack therein, they had to have been removed (Seeck 1883: xxiii and many others listed by Croke 1976: 534sq.). Actual presence of such mentions in the corpus at least of contacts with Eugenius was objected to, along with challenging the likeliness or even possibility of Symmachus' personal acquaintance with Eugenius and Arbogast, an emphasis on Symmachus' effort to keep distance from Eugenius' regime, following his bad experience with the usurpation of Maximus, and stressing Symmachus' own business he was engaged in during the usurpation of Eugenius, all this lead Croke (1976) to reject the possibility of any self-censorship regarding the usurpation of Eugenius. Complementarily, O'Donnell (1979: 69 with note 103) admitted only the possibility of self-censorship on political grounds regarding the usurpation of Maximus, while denying any religious grounds forcing self-censorship by the editor whatsoever. An observation by Bruggisser (1990: 28 note 56) almost acknowledged the self-censorship regarding the usurpation of Maximus, since the letter to Libanius, replied to by Libanius himself, is missing in the corpus – in this letter the events connected to Maximus' usurpation seem to have been alluded to. Also Cameron (1999: 113) admitted the self-censorship only on political grounds, pointing out allusions to Symmachus' engagement in the altar of Victory affair needed not to have been withdrawn from the corpus, while Symmachus' action at the time was well known and his third relation widely read and admired. By contrast, there are many pagan festivals and activities of priestly colleagues mentioned fearlessly in the corpus. This argument is obviously misleading. Festivals and colleagues could hardly have compromised anyone, as they were allowed throughout most of Symmachus' lifetime. Lobbying for the support in the affair, while surely clandestine, was to compromise very easily and as such, any eventual allusions were to have been withdrawn. Croke's arguments are more serious, but proving at their best the possibility that the corpus need not have been censored, but by no means, that it was not or even could not have been censored. Moreover, one Eugenius twice mentioned by Symmachus (*Epist.* III 60–61) could not have been identical with the usurper, *pace* Croke, since this one was a *clarissimus*, while the usurper had reached only the court office of *magister scrinii* (cf. *Socr. Schol. HE* V 25, 1; *Philostorg. HE* XI 2), as rightly observed already by Sievers (1868: 157sq., note 37). The limits of Croke's approach, however, lie elsewhere. They are very well mirrored by his question “*whether any letters would be likely to contain information for which the family of Symmachus could be prosecuted after 402*” (Croke 1976: 542), demonstrating an obvious incapacity on the part of a scholar who spent his lifetime in the liberty of western democracy to understand the reasons for self-censorship. By no means are they always objective. The fear is the reason, the fear of something that need not necessarily exist in reality. But the fear is a reality in itself, as many in the former totalitarian Czechoslovakia could tell.

<sup>16</sup> Honoré (1989: 13sq.).

<sup>17</sup> As to the vexed problem of Flavian's *cursum honorum*, I still deem that the least problematic solution of all uncertainties is that of Errington (1992).

in the text that follows,<sup>18</sup> further an effort on unambiguity<sup>19</sup> and straightforwardness,<sup>20</sup> without much subtlety, and sparing no bitter condemnation.<sup>21</sup>

Slightly earlier there had occurred another attempt by Honoré to trace some remnants of Flavian's pen in the preserved corpus of Roman literature.<sup>22</sup> One speech adduced in the *Historia Augusta* bears the features of supposedly Flavian's pen,<sup>23</sup> and the circumstances of its delivery as described by an author of the *Historia Augusta* are very suspicious. The speech is said to have been delivered by the consular Maecius Faltonius Nicomachus, after the new emperor, Tacitus, had been elected by the senate, but was slow to accept the election. Historical context does not fit the speech. The figure of the orator is fictive and has a bogus name, combined from the names of three *praefecti Urbi* of 4th century, Maecius Memmius Furius Baburius Caecilianus Placidus (346–347), Faltonius Probus Alypius (391), and Nicomachus Flavianus the Younger (392–394). In fact, Tacitus had been elected *in absentia*, having set off for Baiae, which is conceded even by the author of the *Historia Augusta*, who claims, Tacitus had been brought back to the Senate to hear the Nicomachian speech.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, it would have been very unsuitable, according to Honoré, to appeal to the emperor elected by the senate for his prudence and clemency, not to treat the senators as his *coloni*. The sentence *magis gratulemur, quod habemus principem senem, quam illa iteremus, quae plus quam lacrimanda tolerantibus extiterunt*, hardly indicates the speech to have been delivered following an election of a new emperor, but rather in a situation following deliberation on whether or not to support the current emperor, a *senex*, with the alternative being an infant emperor, for the second time after a recent bad experience.

Such a situation did indeed arise in the senate, but more than a hundred years later, following the acknowledgement of Eugenius as the emperor in 393. He then went onto attempt an acknowledgement also by Theodosius,<sup>25</sup> but in vain, since Theodosius had in the meantime proclaimed Augustus his eight-years-old son Honorius. The subsequent civil

<sup>18</sup> Cf. e.g. *Cod. Theod.* XIV 1, 3: *perire nolumus, quidquid aeternae urbi constat fuisse concessum*. In the following text the Roman *decuriales* are said to be allowed to forfeit their rights only when their case is heard by the *iudex decuriae*.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Cod. Theod.* IV 4, 2 commented by Symm. *Epist.* II 13, 1: *verum haec recens sanctio de fideicommissis et codicillorum commodis ab optimo principe in aeternum repudiatis tantum claritudine egreditur lucem superiorum, quantum augustius est regenti sibi quam subditis modum ponere*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Cod. Theod.* XV 14, 7: *omne iuducium, quod vafra mente conceptum iniuriam non iura reddendo Maximus infandissimus tyrannorum credidit promulgandum, damnabimus*.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Cod. Theod.* XVI 5, 17: *nihil ad summum habeant* (sc. *Eunomiani*) *commune cum reliquis*; *ibid.* XVI 5, 18 *nihil ad summum his* (sc. *Manichaeis*) *sit commune cum mundo*.

<sup>22</sup> Honoré (1987: 173sqq.).

<sup>23</sup> *Script. Hist. Aug. Tac.* 6. Honoré's exposition summarized in what follows, has some limits, which, however, have not escaped him, cf. Honoré (1987: 175, note 291) "*a thorough analysis of the HA speeches would be desirable*". The speech itself, moreover, had attracted the interest of earlier scholars, whose conclusions are sometimes hardly compatible with these of Honoré; indeed divergent opinions on the genesis of the entire *Historia Augusta* have been supported thereby, which is reflected and supplemented with further useful observations by Hartke (1951: 57sqq.; 120sqq.; 190sqq.). For doubts about the ostensible authenticity of the documents *en masse* adduced in the *Historia Augusta*, cf. Syme (1971: 271sqq.), who deemed them a pure fiction. According to Burian (1977: 294sqq., esp. 295) their trustworthiness is "*heute allgemein verneint*", they are adduced on purely literary grounds to more deeply impress the reader. Den Hengst (2002: 195) agrees: "*all students of the HA without exception agree that they are fakes written by the same pen as the lives into which they were inserted*".

<sup>24</sup> *Script. Hist. Aug. Tac.* 7, 5–7.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Zos.* IV 55, 3–4; 57, 1.

war was thus rendered unavoidable and the senate forced to choose which side to take. Eugenius was chosen in the end, since in the case of sudden death of Theodosius a danger was threatening the empire of being passed repeatedly into the hands of incompetent emperors, such as were Gratian and Valentinian II. Flavian's strong lobbying for Eugenius in the senate can be presumed, and the speech adduced in the *Historia Augusta* could have been very well delivered then by him. Instead of *Tacite Auguste* the emperor would in this case had to have been addressed *Theodosi Auguste*, for whom the final sentences would then have been intended. Tacitus, besides, himself probably had no children, some occur only in the *Historia Augusta*.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the speech could have been regarded an answer to Flavian's opponent Ambrose, who had supported the choice of Honorius.<sup>27</sup>

The speech is, according to Honoré, very effective, so much so as to stand out among others in the *Historia Augusta*. Its composition, however, resembles the constitutions of the Theodosian Code ascribed by Honoré to Flavian.<sup>28</sup> An emergence of the expression *parvulus* is of interest as well, since in the Code it appears only in the very same constitutions. In the *Historia Augusta* it is otherwise quite frequent; according to Honoré it is, however, a sign of an influence of Flavian's pen upon the author of the *Historia Augusta*.<sup>29</sup>

Despite Honoré's innovative method and his noteworthy conclusions, the feedback of the scholarly world has been rather small. Passing over quotations without any comment, the only reactions I find are the rather sceptical assessments by Malcolm Errington and Charles Hedrick. According to the former, the texts of the constitutions are too brief for any relevant linguistic analysis to be possible, as well as there still remains some uncertainty as to the influence of a *quaestor sacri palatii* on wording of the drafts of constitutions.<sup>30</sup> According to Hedrick, the limits of Honoré's method lie in the process of editing the texts of the constitutions by the compilers of the Theodosian Code.<sup>31</sup> For my part, I am rather persuaded by the fact that Honoré was able to distinguish between six dif-

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Script. Hist. Aug. Tac. 6, 8–9: *teque, Tacite Auguste, convenio petens, obsecrans ac libere pro communi patria legibus<que> deposcens, ne parvulos tuos, si te citius fata praevenerint, facias Romani heredes imperii, ne sic rem p. patresque conscriptos populumque Romanum ut villulam tuam, ut colonos tuos, ut servos tuos relinquant. quare circumspice, imitare Nervas, Traianos, Hadrianos. ingens est gloria morientis principis rem p. magis amare quam filios.* Children of Tacitus are mentioned *ibid.* 14, 1; 16, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Ambros. *De obit. Theod.* 6: *nec movet aetas; fides militum imperatoris perfecta est aetas; ibid.* 8: *fides ergo auget aetatem.*

<sup>28</sup> The effectiveness of the speech is achieved with a combination of emphasis and reiteration. The speech opens with a series of universals: *semper ... neque a quoquam umquam ... nulla umquam ... nihil ... nihil ... nihil ... omnia ... cuncta.* Besides *nihil*, other reiterated expressions occur: *quibus ... quos ... qui ... qui ...* or *ut ... ut ... ut ...* Emperors, according to Honoré, occur in triads with the same intention, cf. Script. Hist. Aug. Tac. 6, 4 *Nerones ... et Heliogabalos et Commodos*; 6, 9 *imitare Nervas, Traianos, Hadrianos.* For similar effect cf. *Cod. Theod.* I 5, 9 *si quos ... si quos ...*; II 4, 5 *universa ... ante omnia ... nullis ...*; III 17, 4 *ne quid ... ne quid ...*; VIII 4, 16 *nullo ... nulla ...*; XV 1, 26 *quantum ... per quos ... quatenus ...*; XV 1, 27 *omnino non ... summam omnem ...*; XV 14, 7 *omne ... nullus ... nullus ...*; XVI 5, 1 *omnes ... nec quemquam ... non ... non ... non ... non ... non ... non ... nihil ...*

<sup>29</sup> Cf. *Cod. Theod.* III 17, 3; 17, 4, and Script. Hist. Aug. Sev. 15, 5; *Vita Clod. Alb.* 5, 6; *Ant. Geta* 3, 3; *Diad. Ant.* 4, 6; *Alex. Sev.* 14, 3; *Maxim. duo* 20, 2; *Gord. tres* 22, 2; *Max. et Balb.* 15, 6; *Trig. tyr.* 27, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Errington (1992: 447). In addition, he saw a difficulty in chronology. According to Honoré, Flavian should have entered his quaestorship prior to 10 October 388, which implicates Symmachus must have gotten acquainted and corresponded with Rufinus, who had informed him about Flavian's promotion (cf. Symm. *Epist.* III 90: *saepe mihi auctor laetitiae aut primus aut solus es; quaestorem antehac fratrem, nunc rectorem praetorianum litteris nuntiasti*) prior to Rufinus' occurrence, as freshly appointed *magister officiorum*, in Rome with Theodosius in 389.

<sup>31</sup> Hedrick (2000: 281 note 41).

ferent pens, one for each specific period of the above circumscribed part of Theodosius' reign. Should Hedrick's objection stand, we were to suppose individual compilers would have to have worked on the constitutions distributed among them according to a strictly chronological key. Errington's objections rather only show possible way of eventually proving Honoré wrong. As even more persuasive I regard Honoré's argumentation for the Nicomachian speech in the *Historia Augusta*.<sup>32</sup> But even if it could be ascribed to Flavian with certainty, we would still know nothing about whether the speech had been in fact published under Flavian's name or not, or even whether it had even been meant for publication. After all, the author of the *Historia Augusta* could have known it from having heard it personally in the senate.<sup>33</sup>

The speech adduced in the *Historia Augusta* represents a useful bridge to another type of writings once connected with Flavian – writings preserved either anonymously or under the name of an author whose identity is uncertain. First of all, there is the *Pervigilium Veneris*. Analysis of the features of its language led Cornelius Brakman to the conclusion that the poem originated in the late 4th century, which immediately inspired William Rollo to seek other clues pointing to the author's identity.<sup>34</sup> One of them he saw in the last verses of the poem, bearing evidence of the author's paganism, as well as of its alleged being already in defense against the state-aided Christianity;<sup>35</sup> another in the allusions to Hybla and Henna, the only toponyms occurring in the poem, both lying in Sicily, where, near Henna, the Nicomachi held their possessions.<sup>36</sup> Further, the description of Sicilian scenery stems, according to Rollo, from the author's intimate knowledge

<sup>32</sup> Despite the deserved criticism of his treatment of the *Historia Augusta* as a whole, cf. Paschoud (1996: xxi): “*Le grand faiblesse ... est de prétendre tout expliquer à partir d'une intuition unique ...*”, and despite serious particular objections of Paschoud (1996: 265sq.), who is thus the third one react to Honoré.

<sup>33</sup> This second possibility seems in some respects compatible with the scholarly unanimity as stated by Den Hengst (cf. supra note 23) about the unauthenticity of the documents adduced in the *Historia Augusta* and perhaps with some of Paschoud's above (note 32) referred objections. But even if the final literary shape of the speech were owed to a pen of the author of the *Historia Augusta*, which is more probable also for the reasons alleged below (note 69), many features of the eventual Flavian's pen would have to have remained and be detected by Honoré, whom we must thus consider as rather an exception (or not to be the “*student of the HA*?”), despite Den Hengst's statement, at least with respect to this particular document. I personally feel inclined towards being another exception, of the same kind. Is Jacqueline Long (cf. supra note 6) to be deemed the third one?

<sup>34</sup> Brakman (1928a), which is, however, an edition of the *Pervigilium* written in Dutch. The conclusions in question are summarized by Rollo (1929: 405sq.) and in Brakman's simultaneously published paper in Latin (1928b: 261sq.). The features in question are the excessive occurrence of the preposition *de* instead of a genitive, a non-prepositional ablative or other prepositions; the usage of the conjunction *vel* in the sense of *et*, the usage of the adjective *toti* in plural instead of *omnes*, the usage of the present indicatives instead of a future tense, and the occurrence of some specific expressions known from the authors of the late 4th century and onwards, in whom, however, they occur so abundantly as to be considered originally colloquial and by then entering the literary language. Moreover, some metric errors appear signaling an accentual stress slowly taking place of the quantity of syllables.

<sup>35</sup> Especially *Pervigil. Vener.* 89–92: *illa cantat, nos tacemus. quando ver venit meum? / quando fiam uti chelidon, ut tacere desinam? / perdidit Musam tacendo, nec me Phoebus respicit. / sic Amyclas, cum tacerent, perdidit silentium.*

<sup>36</sup> Rollo now evoked the authority of Symm. *Epist.* IV 71, 1, where, however, only Sicily in general is mentioned, and thus the possessions of the Nicomachi only seem likely to have been there. Yet, the fact is better evidenced by one of the famous subscriptions to Livy, which perhaps Rollo thought of as well; for these in full, together with the critical apparatus, cf. Zetzel (1980: 40). Henna is really mentioned as a place of sojourn of Flavian's son, however, by contrast to the *Pervigilium*, in which, *ni fallor*, only Hybla appears (*Pervigil. Vener.* 49–52).

of the island, while his very placing the festival in Sicily points to the Nicomachi as well. All these reasons led Rollo to consider Flavian a far more suitable candidate than others. Also here the intensity of response on behalf of the scholarly world has been rather low and in the modern compendia it is almost unreflected.<sup>37</sup> Still, I deem it worth saving from complete oblivion.<sup>38</sup>

Émilienne Demougeot,<sup>39</sup> as well as Tony Honoré, was persuaded that she had found some traces of the political program, of which Flavian had been a partisan, mirrored in the *Historia Augusta*. This time, however, the entire final passage containing the biographies attributed to 'Flavius Vopiscus Syracusius' came under investigation, while other *Scriptores historiae Augustae*, according to Demougeot, show no traces of such a program, apparently congruous with the problems dealt with in the late 4th century.<sup>40</sup> Further, the resemblance of the names of Flavian and 'Flavius Vopiscus' seemed suspicious to Demougeot,<sup>41</sup> the more so, since supported by the fact that both Flavian and his father once held the office of consular of Sicily,<sup>42</sup> while 'Vopiscus' declared himself a Syracusian. Flavian's authorship of the unpreserved *annales*<sup>43</sup> she deemed congruous with her observation that biographies of 'Vopiscus', unlike those of the other *Scriptores*, bear the traces

<sup>37</sup> It was rejected by the very inspirer of Rollo, Brakman (1932: 314), although he himself (1928b: 260sq.) considered it likely that the author had belonged to the Symmachian circle. Flavian himself, however, according to him, had cultivated no poetry, at least as far as we know, while his occupation with public business was also considered an obstacle by Brakman. Flavian's authorship has also been denied by two recent scholars, Catlow (1980: 23) and Formicola (1998: 62), who prefer other candidates to identify with the author. Among the compendia, I find Rollo's suggestion registered only by Smolak (1989: 261).

<sup>38</sup> One minor clue, however, points rather to the Nicomachi in general. The features of the poem resemble closely those of the famous diptychon SYMMACHORVM / NICOMACHORVM, whose pattern in case of the tablet of the Nicomachi could have been the coins once minted in Henna, the centre of the cult of Demeter and Kore, who is depicted on the tablet, with some features of the depiction however pointing to Aphrodite, for which cf. Hedrick (2000: 73sq.). Another minor clue, but only of a currency of the poem within the grasp of Campanian Nola of the late 4th and early 5th century, which would have by no means clashed with the eventual Flavian's authorship, could be the passage of Paulin. Nolan. *Carm. XXIII* 1–7, if it really, "in Form einer Kontrastierung", refers to the above (note 35) quoted verses from *Pervigilium*, as Smolak allows (1989: 263).

<sup>39</sup> Demougeot (1953: 361sq.).

<sup>40</sup> According to Demougeot, the traces of this program are emphasizing the civilian and non-hereditary character of the principate (Script. Hist. Aug. *Tac.* 14, 1; *Prob.* 11, 2–4), which as such, children cannot assume (Script. Hist. Aug. *Tac.* 6, 4–9). Men should be preferred, who had already proven competent, as Aurelian, Tacitus, and Probus are represented by 'Vopiscus' (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 13, 2–4; *Prob.* 12, 2–7 and also 4–7). Further, emphasizing the role of the senate both in electing a new emperor and in the administration of the state (Script. Hist. Aug. *Tac.* 12, 1; *Prob.* 13, 1; *Div. Aurel.* 13, 4; 26, 8; *Tac.* 9, 6; 18–19; *Prob.* 11, 2), and denouncing the behaviour of soldiers, who had in fact snatched the right of election (Script. Hist. Aug. *Prob.* 10, 6; 20, 2–6; 23, 2), and upon whom, when obedient to the senate, praise is bestowed (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 41, 1–2; *Tac.* 2, 2). Warm affection for the traditional divinities, whose power 'Vopiscus' acknowledges (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 26, 5; *Prob.* 12, 7), as well as the power of sacred objects related to them (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 18, 5–6; *Tac.* 16, 6), together with a detailed description of the character of their employment (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 19–20). These divinities are perceived as guardians of Rome (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 26, 5; *Prob.* 15, 4), while Christianity is not spared from malicious comments (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 20, 5; *Quadr. tyr.* 8, 2–4), nor from hidden denouncement (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 42, 6; *Prob.* 24, 2–3). In addition, in the biography of Aurelian, reverence is shown to Apollonius of Tyana (Script. Hist. Aug. *Div. Aurel.* 24, 2–9), whose life Flavian had been interested in (cf. supra p. 50sq.).

<sup>41</sup> Together with the occurrence of the figure named Maecius Faltonius Nicomachus in the passage discussed above (p. 53 sq.).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *CIL* VI 1782 = *ILS* 2947 vers. 3; *CIL* VI 1783 = *ILS* 2948 vers. 1 (Flavian); *Symm. Epist.* IV 71, 1 (Volusius Venustus).

<sup>43</sup> For which cf. supra p. 49sq.



of historians' method.<sup>44</sup> All this led her to identify 'Vopiscus' with Flavian.<sup>45</sup> Her suggestion, however, has again provoked almost no reaction, not even among the students of the *Historia Augusta*. I find it mentioned but twice, in both cases without any comment, thus neither disapproving, but solely acknowledging its existence while discussing a related problem.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps the debate on the unity of authorship of the *Historia Augusta*, which may be about to start again,<sup>47</sup> would save it from neglect. For my part, however, I see it at least rather less compatible with the notion of Flavian's *annales* having been the source of the *Historia Augusta*,<sup>48</sup> although the possibility that Flavian himself had used as a source his own previously written work, cannot be excluded completely.

The third piece of writing of somewhat mysterious author is the *Fables* of Avian, which also had once been held to be the work of Flavian, namely by Robert Jones.<sup>49</sup> His argument was based on the ancient and unfortunately unverifiable assertion by Cannegieter, according to whom the author's name had appeared in elder manuscripts in the form of 'Flavius Avianus',<sup>50</sup> and on subsequent considerations by Wernsdorf and Villeneuve, that this form may have been the result of an inappropriate expansion of the abbreviation 'Fl', which was in fact no abbreviation at all, but an integral part of the name 'Flavianus'.<sup>51</sup> Jones himself had identified this 'Flavianus' with Flavian, while one Theodosius, to whom the fables had been dedicated, with the emperor Theodosius I, contrary to current opinion of his identity with Macrobius, the author of *Saturnalia*.<sup>52</sup> The proposal was rejected by Jochen

<sup>44</sup> Referring to primary sources of the *Bibliotheca Ulpiana* (cf. Script. Hist. Aug. Div. Aurel. 1, 7; 8, 1; 24, 7; Tac. 8, 1; Prob. 2, 1; Numer. 11, 3), affection for reminiscing of the days of old (cf. Script. Hist. Aug. Tac. 1; Car. 1–3), or non-omission of the note on the emperor Tacitus' care for the writings of the historian Tacitus (Script. Hist. Aug. Tac. 10, 3).

<sup>45</sup> Without reflecting the debate on Flavian's *annales*, which had then just started to move in the direction to the above briefly summarized conclusions (p. 49sq.), Demougeot felt the need to emphasize that Flavian surely had been a far better historian than 'Vopiscus', but that the biographies written under this name he had considered polemical and not historical work, and that this is why he had published them under pseudonym. He had been made to write them by Theodosius' final abandonment of religious tolerance and his collaboration with the Roman senatorial aristocracy.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Cameron (1964: 23, note 73); Syme (1967: 111). For Stéphane Ratti's recent contribution cf. here p. 60, Addendum.

<sup>47</sup> For a brief summary of the debate cf. Mouchová (1975: 7sq.) and Den Hengst (2002). The paper by the latter advertises at the same time the conclusions of a recent computer based research challenging the long preferred Dessau's theory of unity of authorship and professes Den Hengst's own preferences pointing in the same direction.

<sup>48</sup> For which cf. supra p. 50.

<sup>49</sup> Jones (1969: 203sq.).

<sup>50</sup> Cannegieter (1731: 262) referred himself to certain *codices vetusti*, "quos inspexerunt Barthius & Vossius". Yet Jones (1969: 204, note 6) remarked that Barth's codex unfortunately had disappeared and in none of the extant codices of Vossius does such a form of the author's name appear.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Wernsdorf (1791: 670) and Villeneuve (1883: 98). The inspiration for the former had been the character, otherwise unknown to him, of Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, the latter had apparently overlooked this observation, since he later argued with Wernsdorf, referring himself to "toutes les anciennes éditions", in which the abbreviation 'Fl' had stood before the name 'Avianus', and to "certains interprètes", who had proposed just this solution. Afterwards, Villeneuve earned the criticism by Jones (1969: 205) for the non-specification of his sources.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Avian. *Fab.* praef. init. As an alternative, but a less likely one, Jones (1969: 208sq.) considered the possibility of the identity of 'Flavianus' with Nicomachus Flavianus the Younger and 'Theodosius' with the emperor Theodosius II. Generally, it has been objected that the dedication is far too familiar for the emperor to have been addressed thereby, and that the praise of the dedicatee's erudition had had to be a blatant flattery in such a case (for Theodosius I's erudition cf. *Epit. de Caes.* 48, 11: *litteris, si nimium perfectos contempleretur, mediocriter doctus; sagax plane multumque diligens ad noscenda*

Küppers,<sup>53</sup> who regarded the assertion of the fuller form of the name having been attested by manuscript tradition as invented,<sup>54</sup> and proved unlikely the identity of the dedicatee with any emperor whatsoever.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, another piece of evidence against Jones may be added. As mentioned above, Flavian's *annales* had been dedicated to Theodosius, which information is supplied by a source of such kind and within such context, that also other dedicated writings would be expected to have been adduced, were there any.<sup>56</sup>

Flavian's *Realencyclopädie* entry counts in another un preserved piece of writing of his, the grammatical treatise.<sup>57</sup> It had once been ascribed to Flavian by August Reifferscheid, on the basis of an item of the *Catalogus Bobbiensis* published by Muratori: *liber I Flaviani de consensu nominum et verborum*. According to Reifferscheid, Flavian's occupation as emendator could have made this issue intimate to him, as well as it perhaps did to Flavian's younger contemporary (for Reifferscheid) Macrobius, whose treatise of a similar kind has come down to us.<sup>58</sup> His conclusion, however, had been proved wrong before long by Heinrich Keil,<sup>59</sup> who had pointed out that the name 'Flavianus' occurred frequently in manuscripts containing Latin grammatical treatises, but that for the most part the grammarian Flavius Sosipater Charisius quite safely can be identified. His *Ars grammatica* in five books has come down upon us as well, and the quotations therefrom often are almost verbatim identical with those of the grammarian 'Flavianus'. The title *de consensu nominum et verborum* thus can relate to the fifth book of Charisius' *Ars, de idiomatibus*, should it indeed not relate to that *Ars* as a whole. Yet, this conclusion had escaped Otto Seeck, the author of Flavian's *Realencyclopädie* entry.

Now, we have arrived at the curiosities. A hint of Flavian's authorship of perhaps a botanical treatise, a notice in the scholion to Vergil *musco] herba quae circa caudices arborum nascitur bene olens vel muscus nomen herbae nascentis in cortice vel in pariete, ut Flavianus ait* (*Schol. Bern. ad Verg. eclog. 6, 62*), was indeed considered as mistaken already by Reifferscheid, who deemed that the name 'Flavianus' had been quoted instead of that of (Papirius) Fabianus, whom he credited with the work titled *De caussis naturalibus* (sic!).<sup>60</sup> As such, however, his conjecture was again to be corrected by Keil. The quotation came once more from Charisius, as the later editor of these scholia approved of it.<sup>61</sup>

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*maiorum gesta*). By contrast, Jones saw as an advantage of his proposal the fact that an outward of the figures of the dedicator and the dedicatee as depicted in one illustrated manuscript could be seen as better suited in such a case, as well as the very fact, that already one of the contemporary manuscripts probably had been copiously, and thus expensively, illustrated.

<sup>53</sup> Küppers (1977: 25sq. and 51sqq.).

<sup>54</sup> Cannegieter, however, quoted both his sources precisely, and so it is at least possible to make certain that both had really counted on the form of 'Flavius Avianus' as on attested to in elder manuscripts, cf. Barth (1624: 1766): *in priscis schediis*, and Vossius (1630: 318): *in antiquis codd.*

<sup>55</sup> Küppers demonstrated that Jones had started out on some erroneous suppositions as to its origin when interpreting the above (note 52) mentioned depiction, and that he had not taken into account some features, which the depiction lacks, but which it could not lack, were the dedicatee an emperor.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *CIL* VI 1783 = *ILS* 2948 vers. 18–21: QVID QVID IN ISTVM (sc. Flavianum) CAECA IN SIMVLATIONE CONMISSVM EST, PROCVL AB EIVS | PRINCIPIS (sc. Theodosii) VOTO FVISSE IVDICETIS, CUIVS IN EVM EFFVSA BENIVOLENTIA ET VSQ(ue) AD AN|NALIVM, QVOS CONSECRARI SIBI A QVAESTORE ET PRAEFECTO SVO VOLVIT, PROVECTA | EXCITAVIT LIVOREM IMPROBORVM.

<sup>57</sup> Seeck (1909: 2508).

<sup>58</sup> Reifferscheid (1861: 23, note †); Muratori (1740: 820).

<sup>59</sup> Keil (1866: 331sqq.).

<sup>60</sup> Reifferscheid (1861: 23, note †).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Keil (1866: 334); Charis. I 11, 32: *hic muscus herba quae in parietibus vel corticibus arborum nascitur vel haeret*; Hagen (1867: 801, comm. ad loc.).

The name of 'Flavianus' occurs in medieval manuscripts as well. In the 15th century catalogue of the library of St. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury a title *Versus Flaviani ad Quintillianum de curia vitanda* is contained.<sup>62</sup> In the Parisian 14th/15th century codex *Sangermanensis*, in some *Flores morales*, a *Flavianus in Gestis Graecorum* is quoted.<sup>63</sup> According to Paul Lehmann, this one may be the same as this, who is to be found in one 15th century manuscript from Jena, in the heading of the verses supposedly inscribed in the four gates of Rome: *hec Flavianus recitat in Graecorum gestis de urbe Romana*.<sup>64</sup> To my knowledge, eventual identity of these doubtful Flaviani with Flavian never came to mind, and Lehmann then even considered a reason for caution in respect of a scope for identification of 'Flavianus' the author of the above, for now only briefly discussed *De vestigiis sive de dogmate philosophorum*. He preferred the explanation that all these flavianic quotations came in fact from a unique anecdotal source, possibly containing a material which originated in antiquity, but as a whole arisen sometime later on. The name of the author itself he held to be fictive, invented in order to raise interest, which practice had been frequent especially in 12th and 13th century England and France. In my view, however, the possibility of some hardly tangible liaison to Flavian, unlikely as it can be, is not to be omitted completely yet. As the addressee of *Versus Flaviani ad Quintillianum de curia vitanda* Lehmann considered the famous rhetorician of the 1st century, Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, but with the reservation that the 'Flavianus' in question hardly could have been his contemporary. Yet, there exists another identity still of this addressee, that is possible, that of the senator Quintilianus, the addressee of two of the letters of Symmachus, and thus Flavian's contemporary.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, however, were the poem with this title addressed to a contemporary, and not to a famous historical figure, its inclusion in a corpus of anecdotal material would surely not be the first thing expected.<sup>66</sup>

The last question connected with Flavian's literary work applies to it as a whole: namely whether the complete loss of its fruit is to be linked anyhow to his *damnatio memoriae*. Some details are quite well compatible with such a notion. Jörg Schlumberger and Michel Festy had thought it over whether the *Epitome de Caesaribus* could not have arisen in

<sup>62</sup> James (1903: 378, no. 1557).

<sup>63</sup> Pitra (1855: lxxxv).

<sup>64</sup> Lehmann (1927: 25sq.). The manuscript in question is quoted by Bertalot (1910: 78sq. = 1975: 141sq.), yet the name 'Flavianus' is only an emendation of the manuscript reading 'Flamanus'. The author could, however, have born also the name of 'Flaccianus' or 'Flaccensius', and instead of the gates of Rome, the verses also could relate to those of Carthage, as they are adduced, as part of a short anecdotal text titled *Causa excidii Cartaginencium*, in the other three manuscripts. In one of them, the *De nugis curialium* of Walter Map is contained as well, yet he himself is not to be regarded the author of the verses, as James (1914: 260sq. and 271) has shown. Map's non-authorship is emphasized also by Hinton (1923: 466), who pointed out that in another of the three manuscripts, *Harleianus 7322*, 'Flaccianus' is quoted a number of times as an author of anecdotes.

<sup>65</sup> Symm. *Epist.* VIII 36; IX 57. Based on the latter, "un rang égal à celui de Symmaque", he was credited with by Callu (1995: 131, note 1 to Letter XXXVI), while Roda (1981: 190) pointed out that the only known possible identification of this Quintilianus is *rector Samniticus* of *CIL X 4865* from Venafrum in Samnium, admitting however, that this is "una congettura priva di riscontri oggettivi". Unlike Symmachus's addressee, this one is registered in *PLRE I 759*, no. 2, which makes it clear we know nothing more about him.

<sup>66</sup> In the paper advertised above (note 12) I hope to show that the ascription of *De vestigiis sive de dogmate philosophorum*, which had contained anecdotal material, to Flavian does not lack minor corroboration. The plausibility that the specification 'in Gestis Graecorum' could somehow relate to the same work, is not obviously too high, but is it really to be excluded completely?

Flavian's entourage seeking for at least a partial preservation of his *annales*.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, an extermination of Flavian's translation of *Vita Apollonii* could have provoked speedy emergence of a different translation by Victorianus.<sup>68</sup> Although the *Historia Augusta* as a whole hardly had arisen by the same virtue as is considered for the *Epitome de Caesari-bus*, the inclusion of eventual Flavian's speech therein could have been backed by specific motivation of a somehow similar kind.<sup>69</sup> And the possibility, although hardly necessary in itself, that the ground for the anonymous preservation of the *Pervigilium Veneris* could lie in the *damnatio memoriae* of its author, again cannot be excluded.

We know almost nothing of whether or not an abolition of the writings by the *damnatus*, were he primarily a politician and not a writer, and were his writings not held to be obnoxious in themselves,<sup>70</sup> did go along with the process of abolition of the memory,<sup>71</sup> and we will hardly ever know much more.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps some could be tempted to see only two possibilities here, the abolition of writings to have been a systematic part of the *damnatio*, or not to have been its part at all, and then, while there is very little evidence for the first possibility to be solidly based, they would conclude the second possibility certainly would have been the case. Obviously, reality never is and never has been black and white and even individual cases could have differed in many aspects. Innovations could have been implemented from time to time. I can hardly believe that the writings, which were to carry the memory of their author into the future, would never have been attempted to be abolished along with this memory. Moreover, I do believe Flavian's case to have been one of these attempts.

## Addendum

Very recently Stéphane Ratti (2010) has presented a hypothesis that *Historia Augusta* as a whole is a work of Nicomachus Flavianus, the same, indeed, which was in earlier

<sup>67</sup> Schlumberger (1974: 245sq.); Festy (1999: lv).

<sup>68</sup> So Prchlik (2007 [2009]: 207).

<sup>69</sup> Cf. supra p. 55 with note 33 for the possibilities of how the author of the *Historia Augusta* could have known the speech. Given Flavian's engagement with the business of Eugenius' government during the time of usurpation, it may easily be supposed that he himself had found no time to prepare the speech for publication, which would have been impossible under his name after Frigidus. Thus the author of the *Historia Augusta* could have had some draft at hand or, as stated above, he could have heard the speech in the senate personally.

<sup>70</sup> The vice versa instances, of writings putting their authors in danger and themselves often on the pyre, are conveniently brought together and documented quite well by Speyer (1981).

<sup>71</sup> Hedrick (2000) again represents a very good starting point for the study of this phenomenon in general.

<sup>72</sup> These pieces of information should be taken into account: the writings by Mark Antony and Brutus were available under Augustus (Ovid. *Ex Pont.* I 1, 23–24). Cornelius Gallus should have disappeared from Vergil's *Georgics* at Augustus' request (Servius *Comm. in Verg. Ecl.* 10, 1; *Comm. in Verg. Georg.* IV 1; Thomas 1988: 13sq. summarizes modern doubts about the tale; Speyer 1981: 59 seems to believe it) and his own writings are lost as well. Septimius Severus supposedly ordered abolition of the writings of his predecessor, whose precise name Aurelius Victor is uncertain of (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 20, 1 and cf. 19, 1–2), due to the confusion of the names of the emperor Didius Julianus, who had hardly ever written anything, and the jurist Salvius Julianus, who had died long time before. Yet, whatever the confusion stems from, should the account be deemed credible, it is explicitly stated there that the writings were abolished as part of a *damnatio*. Left out of account must remain a fact that Flavian's contemporary and Symmachus' colleague in the consulate of 391, Tatianus, had suffered a *damnatio* as well (*Cod. Theod.* IX 38, 9), and his Homeric cento (for ascription cf. Rey 1998: 24, note 1) is lost; here we can be certain that this loss is not due to eventual abolition within the scope of a *damnatio*, since Tatianus had been rehabilitated in 396 (*Cod. Theod.* IX 38, 9), whereas his cento had still been read by the empress Eudocia (Eudoc. Aug. *Epigr.* 19–29 [pp. 518–520 Rey]).

inoffensive version dedicated to Theodosius, and to which it was referred to as *annales* (cf. supra p. 49sq.). Here it can only be noted that this hypothesis is based on a series of observations, some of which may be worth a consideration, but cannot be considered to prove this hypothesis valid. Furthermore, it is mentioned there, the authorship of another preserved piece of writing, viz. pseudo-Quintilian's declamation *Miles Marianus*, should be ascribed to Flavian, according to Ratti.

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**HISTORICVS DISSERTISSIMVS, BUT WHAT ELSE?  
QUESTIONS REGARDING THE LITERARY WORK  
OF VIRIUS NICOMACHUS FLAVIANUS**

Summary

The literary work of Virius Nicomachus Flavianus has been completely lost and the fragmentary information we have provoke controversies. Attempts had also been made by modern scholars at identifying Flavian as the author of some of the preserved literary works, and a name of one 'Flavianus', the author of some anecdotal works, had been noticed while going through medieval manuscripts. At the end of the paper the question is touched on of the misfortune possibly brought upon Flavian's writings by the *damnatio memoriae* cast upon him after Frigidus.

**HISTORICVS DISSERTISSIMVS, ALE CO JEŠTĚ?  
OTÁZKY KOLEM LITERÁRNÍHO DÍLA VIRIA NICOMACHA FLAVIANA**

Shrnutí

Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, jedna z hlavních postav Macrobiových *Saturnalií*, byl sám spisovatelem, o jeho zcela ztraceném literárním díle však máme jen několik útržkovitých informací, jejichž interpretace je sporná. Moderní badatelé navíc uvažovali o tom, zda ve skutečnosti nebyl právě on autorem několika děl dodnes dochovaných, a se jménem „Flavianus“ se lze setkat i ve středověkých rukopisech coby údajným autorem různých děl spíše kuriosních. V tomto článku jsou naše znalosti o Flavianových literárních dílech, včetně nástinu sporných otázek, sumarizovány, probrány možnosti Flavianova autorství děl dalších a zvažena možnost, zda na osud těchto děl mohla mít vliv *damnatio memoriae*, již byl Flavianus stížen po své sebevraždě u Frigidu.